

**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY
AND MOTOR VEHICLES**

**Red-Light Camera
Summary Report**

FY 2013–2014



Revised February 27, 2015

Introduction

Section 316.0083(4)(b), Florida Statutes, directs the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to provide a summary report on the use and operation of traffic infraction detectors (“red-light cameras”) in Florida.

Section 316.0083, Florida Statutes, describes the processes for violations of traffic infraction detectors. A traffic infraction enforcement officer issues a Notice of Violation to the violator within 30 days of a violation. The violator may pay the notice or contest the violation through an appeals process within 60 days of the date of the Notice of Violation. If the violator fails to pay or appeal the notice, a traffic infraction enforcement officer issues a Uniform Traffic Citation to the violator, with a copy to the Clerk of Court for adjudication.

Methodology

DHSMV created an online survey to gather information and data from local agencies responsible for the administration of red-light-camera programs during Fiscal Year (FY) 2013–2014. The twenty-seven question survey was designed to collect information such as, camera locations, Notices of Violation, crash statistics, procedural information, etc., and covered activity that occurred from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

The surveys were directly distributed to all counties and municipalities (jurisdictions) that had remitted red-light camera monies to the Department of Revenue during the reporting period, along with those identified from Uniform Traffic Citation data. In addition, the Florida Sheriffs Association and the Florida Police Chiefs Association distributed the survey to their members.

The deadline for survey responses was October 1, 2014. Any actions that jurisdictions may have taken related to their program subsequent to that date would not be reflected in this report.

See Appendices A and B—Actual Responses to Survey Questions by Jurisdiction.

Discussion

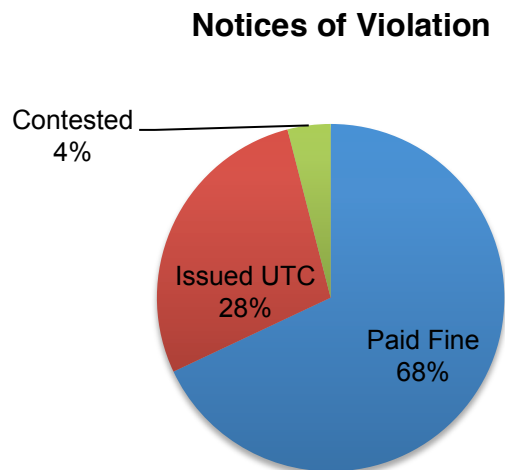
In total, 68 jurisdictions completed the online survey in accordance with reporting requirements set forth in 316.0083(4)(a), Florida Statutes.

The cities of Campbellton, Florida City, and Lakeland were contacted but did not respond. Seven other jurisdictions (Collier County, El Portal, Hallandale Beach, Hialeah Gardens, North Bay Village, Palm Springs, and Pembroke Pines) indicated that they did not complete the survey because their cameras had been removed or their program had been terminated prior to the survey’s reporting period.

Notices of Violation and Uniform Traffic Citations

According to survey respondents, during this reporting period a total of 940,814 Notices of Violation were issued. The majority of these Notices of Violation, 647,991 (68%), were paid within the allotted time period. For 28% of the Notices of Violation, the customer did not respond and a Uniform Traffic Citation was issued. The remaining 37,236 (4%) were contested.

As of October 1, 2014, 19,066 (51%) of the contested violations were dismissed, 12,190 (33%) were upheld, and 5,980 (16%) were pending. The number of contested Notices of Violation was similar to the prior year (3%), yet the number of contested notices dismissed by the issuing agency dropped 16% from last year.



Source: Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles FY 2013–2014 Red-Light Camera Survey.

By comparison, Florida law enforcement officers issued 59,573 in-person citations to drivers who ran red lights in Fiscal Year 13-14. The number of in-person citations issued by law enforcement officers has recently been declining. In Fiscal Year 11-12, 81,313 citations were issued and 66,168 citations were issued in Fiscal Year 12-13, a reduction of more than 26 percent) in just two years.

Intersection Selection

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of various factors when selecting intersections for red-light camera installation. According to the survey, the top contributing factors were traffic crash data, law enforcement officer observation, and traffic citation data. Additional responses include engineering and infrastructure and pedestrian and bike safety.

Metrics Used to Identify Success/Failure of Camera Locations

Reductions in violations and crashes were the most common metrics used to determine whether to move or remove cameras. Some jurisdictions indicated that driver awareness and citizens' comments were also considered.

Personnel

Jurisdictions were asked about the personnel who review camera images to determine whether a notice should be issued, review contested notices, and issue citations. Answers identified whether sworn officers, non-sworn government employees, non-sworn contractor employees, or other persons were involved in these processes related to red-light camera programs.

Personnel	Notice of Violation		Uniform Traffic Citation
	Reviewing Camera Images	Reviewing Contested NOVs	Issuing
Law Enforcement Officer	82%	69%	74%
Non-sworn Government Employee	34%	35%	41%
Non-sworn Contractor Employee	15%	13%	
Other	6%	15%	26%

Columns do not add up to 100% because respondents were able to select multiple options.

Of the 18 jurisdictions that selected “Other” for issuance of Uniform Traffic Citations, 13 indicated that their red-light camera vendor issued citations. The remaining 5 jurisdictions responded: “non-sworn law enforcement”; “Clerk of Court”; “auto generated by the system for non-payment”; “non-sworn contract employee”; and “system will automatically issue Uniform Traffic Citation if violation notice is not addressed.”

Right Turns on Red Lights

Pursuant to section 316.0083, Florida Statutes:

“A Notice of Violation and a traffic citation may not be issued for failure to stop at a red light if the driver is making a right-hand turn in a careful and prudent manner at an intersection where right-hand turns are permissible.”

“A Notice of Violation and Uniform Traffic Citation may not be issued under this section if the driver of the vehicle came to a complete stop after crossing the stop line and before turning right if permissible at a red light, but failed to stop before crossing over the stop line or other point at which a stop is required.”

Of the 68 survey respondents, 46 (68%) indicated that they issue Notices of Violation for right turns on red lights and provided the policy or guidelines they use to issue these notices. Thirteen of these 46 jurisdictions do not include a definition of “careful and prudent manner” in their policy or guidelines.

The remaining 22 (32%) survey respondents indicated that they did not issue Notices of Violation for right turns on red lights.

Other Use of Red-light Camera Images

Of the 68 survey respondents, 94% reported that they use their red-light cameras to investigate other crimes. Florida law does not address the use of red-light camera images for other purposes, nor are red-light camera images specifically addressed in public records laws.

Examples of other crimes include: robbery, burglary, DUI, hit-and-run crashes, police pursuits, homicide, shooting vehicles, general public investigations, auto theft, retail theft, bank robberies, missing persons, and domestic violence.

Consideration of Ordinance Repeal

Twelve survey respondents indicated that their jurisdictions have considered repealing their red-light camera ordinance. Only one of the twelve had terminated their program since July 1, 2013, and one other jurisdiction stated that their program was under review.

Actions Taken to Improve Safety Measures

Survey respondents were asked to describe what actions they have taken to improve safety measures at red-light camera intersections. Thirty-six jurisdictions indicated that they have taken some form of action as a result of their red-light camera program. These actions include infrastructure improvements (e.g., installation of medians, increased signage, tree trimming, repaved intersection, re-striping, “yield to pedestrian” signs), as well as public education and awareness campaigns (e.g., message boards to advise motorists of video enforcement, program materials on city websites).

Additional Analyses

The Department is unable to determine the effectiveness that red light cameras have in decreasing intersection crashes due to the inability to validate vehicle crash information provided by the various jurisdictions. For example, jurisdictions were asked to provide us with the geospatial locations of intersections with red light cameras, and to provide data on the crashes occurring at those intersections during Fiscal Year 2013-14. Unfortunately, not all jurisdictions provided geospatial locations, and the coordinates that were provided did not always reconcile to a specific intersection. Department personnel created an algorithm using the provided coordinates in order to match crashes in our database to those locations in an attempt to validate the crash information we received from jurisdictions. However, the majority of crash information we received was not consistent with the results of our internal query.

Jurisdictions were also asked to provide the number of both sideswipe and front-to-rear crashes for each intersection with a red light camera, based on the 12-month period prior to the camera installation and for Fiscal Year 2013-14. Only 50 of the 68 jurisdictions that completed the survey provided crash data as requested. Using the provided numbers, and assuming that each of the 50 jurisdictions that provided information was able to accurately report such data, it must be noted that 24 jurisdictions indicated an

increase in sideswipe crashes; 30 reported an increase in front-to-rear crashes; and 30 reported an increase in overall crashes at intersections with red light cameras.

Using the Department's data, we conducted a crash analysis on red light cameras located only on state roads. Our analysis replicated the one performed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) in their *Research Memorandum* dated February 7, 2014, and included a comparison of crashes occurring prior-to and subsequent-to the installation of a red light camera. Our results closely matched those reported by OPPAGA, in that fatalities, injuries, and sideswipe crashes decreased by 41, 1, and 84 percent respectively, while angle crashes increased by 23 percent, rear-end crashes increased by 37 percent, and the total number of crashes increased by 13 percent.

After reviewing the limited data provided by the jurisdictions, and further analyzing the Department's crash data, we were unable to determine whether or not Florida's red light camera program (as a whole) has had a significant positive impact on public safety.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Of the jurisdictions contacted, 68 reported use of red-light cameras during the FY 2013–14. Three jurisdictions did not respond to the survey and seven jurisdictions reported that they discontinued their traffic infraction detection program and removed their cameras prior to July 1, 2013.

Survey respondents indicated that they issued 940,814 Notices of Violation, and ranked traffic crash data, law enforcement observation, and traffic citation data as the primary factors used in determining camera placement. Additionally, 64 of the 68 respondents used red-light cameras to investigate other crimes, including robbery, DUI, and hit-and-run crashes.

Half of the respondents have implemented additional safety measures—such as infrastructure improvements and public awareness campaigns—in conjunction with their traffic infraction detection program.

We recommend that the Florida Legislature consider requiring each local jurisdiction operating a red light camera device during the fiscal year to provide detailed information regarding such use to the State (in a manner prescribed by the State) no later than September 30th of each year. Such information should include the following minimum requirements:

- A. The name of the jurisdiction and the contact information of the person responsible for the administration of the red light camera program;
- B. The location of each camera, including both geospatial and cross-road descriptions of the location of each device;

- C. The date that each red light camera became operational, and the dates of camera operation during the fiscal year, including any status changes of the camera's use during the reporting period;
- D. Data related to the issuance and disposition of notices of violation and subsequent uniform traffic citations issued during the reporting period;
- E. Vehicle crash data (including fatalities and injuries) for crashes that occurred within a 250 foot radius of the geospatial coordinates for each red light camera intersection during the 12 month period immediately preceding the initial date of camera operation. Data submitted should be able to be validated against the Department's crash data.
- F. Identify any and all alternative safety measures (e.g., increasing the yellow change/red clearance interval, increasing the visibility of traffic lights, installation of advance dilemma zone detection systems) that the jurisdiction considered and/or implemented during the reporting period in lieu of or in addition to red light camera operation. For any alternative safety measures implemented, the date of implementation should be provided to the State to assist in the analysis of crash data at that geospatial location.

The above recommendations will facilitate a more detailed analysis of the impact red light cameras programs have on intersection crashes. The analysis will only be possible if the jurisdictions comply with the statutory reporting provisions.

*Survey results were compiled by the Office of Performance Management,
Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.*